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SUBJECT: SLOVENIA AGREES ON KOSOVO, WORRIES ABOUT RUSSIA

REF: SECSTATE 5652

Classified By: COM Thomas B. Robertson

¶1. (C) Summary. Just back from a weekend visit to Belgrade with FM Rupel, MFA Director of Western Balkan Affairs, Leon Marc, expressed the Government of Slovenia's unreserved agreement that there should be no daylight between the US and EU positions on the future status of Kosovo. Raising the persistent concern of Russia's reaction to Ahtisaari's report, Marc suggested success would be better assured if Russia were engaged more closely and bilaterally by the US on its particular concerns about the expected outcome. In a meeting with DCM, former Slovene Ambassador to the UN, Roman Kirn, also suggested the importance of engaging China on Kosovo. Marc said FM Rupel found PM Kostunica to be "softer" and more forthcoming than expected in his meeting with him, and given that Kostunica has "never been keen on Slovenia" thought the meetings went well and were productive. Slovenia also advocates reopening EU stability and association talks with Serbia, keeping in mind the need for constructive engagement on Kosovo and real cooperation with the ICTY. End Summary.

Attention to Russia and China Key

¶2. (C) Polecon Chief met with Leon Marc to discuss reftel points. Separately, DCM delivered message to new Head of the Americas Department and former Slovene Ambassador to the UN Roman Kirn, and Ambassador discussed with FM Rupel at a private dinner (septel). The GOS is in complete agreement on the need for all members of the EU and the US to have a unified approach and to offer full support to UN Special Representative Ahtisaari when he reveals his recommendations on the future status of Kosovo. Marc said that, while Slovenia would continue to pay "lip service" to Serbia, and that it would not give "blind" support to Ahtisaari, it was committed to backing his plan.

¶3. (C) When asked about differences of opinion within the EU about moving ahead without delay on the Ahtisaari, both Marc and Kirn expressed more concern about Russia and China. Kirn said he was much less concerned about EU unity than Russian opposition. Both advised more active engagement with Russia on its concerns. Kirn (recently returned from the UN) also said that China's acquiescence on Security Council decisions on issues far from its regional concerns can no longer be taken for granted. He recommended that China be

included in discussion of this issue.

Rupel Coaxes Serb Leaders

¶4. (C) Marc said that Rupel's meetings with FM Draskovic and PM Kostunica went well. In both, he stressed the importance of approaching the Kosovo question realistically and maintaining focus on long term goals of NATO and EU membership. Rupel also urged the Government of Serbia to cooperate with the ICTY as this would be key to reopening SAA with Europe.
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